

2018.01.30

2 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding comments on ‘States Employment Board: living wage 2017’ (P.122/2017): [OQ.18/2018]

Will the Chief Minister advise Members whether he will circulate comments on P.122/2017, States Employment Board Living Wage 2017, which was initially lodged as P.72/2017 last July and which is due for debate on 20th February 2018, in ample time to allow Members in-depth consideration of the full implications of support, or otherwise, of this serious proposed step in the development of the Jersey economy?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

The decision to adopt the Caritas Living Wage in Jersey is an entirely voluntary one for any organisation. I have expressed my support for the principle in the past and Ministers are due to consider the costs and the practicalities next week, after which a response will be published I expect by Friday.

4.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am grateful that I do not have to yet again move the proposition in order to get a response in good time. So when you say “next Friday” are you planning ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Through the Chair please.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Chief Minister planning ... it was the use “next”: next Friday could be this Friday or it could be a week Friday? If it is this Friday I congratulate him for getting out comments and a reasoned response to the proposition by 6th April when Caritas have invited the Living Wage Foundation to come and talk about the living wage. Does he accept my congratulations? **[Laughter]**

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I do not accept his congratulations because, as he rightly explained, this Friday is the coming Friday, next Friday is the Friday after. But the point he does make, which I had not quite connected, was that the Council of Ministers are due to consider the matter on the 6th. Yet the Caritas Living Wage do have a presentation, I see one of his colleagues is due to speak at that presentation, on the 6th and I was intending to publish on the 8th. The 8th is therefore the backstop position, I will see if there is any way that we could bring it forward because it would be useful, I recognise that, to have some comments prior to that discussion, it is called here. I cannot promise that so that is why I do not accept his congratulations but I will see if I can. The backstop position is the 8th. But he knows already, every single States employee directly employed by the States is on the Caritas living wage. The issue is the on-contract.

4.2.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

It must be an extremely detailed and complex report and set of comments on the proposal because this has been lodged since July last year and one wonders why he cannot speed that up by a matter of 2 days in order to allow Members to fully understand and see both sides of whatever arguments are there in plenty of time for the debate on the 20th.

The Deputy Bailiff:

So the question is why can it not be speeded up, Chief Minister, I think.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

As we keep hearing time and time again, Members diaries are busy, the Council of Ministers is scheduled to meet on the 6th. It would require either for the matter to be dealt with electronically or an extra meeting put in.

[10:15]

The Deputy knows fundamentally this is not about directly-employed because we are already meeting the Caritas Living Wage thresholds. This is about on-contracts and what the costs would be and therefore departments have to think about the money and the cost to them as well and, if we are going to say yes over time to delivering this, how we are going to meet those costs.